

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FT, FR, ET, PORT, OAU
SUBJ: ROUND TABLES ON DJIBOUTI

1. FEBRUARY 10 ETHIOPIAN HERALD REPORTED POPULAR LIBERATION MOVEMENT (MPL) WELCOMED DECISION OF OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE TO CONVENE ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE OF ALL DJIBOUTI POLITICAL GROUPS WITH VIEW TOWARDS SPEEDY ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE FOR TFAI. ARTICLE NOTED CALL FOR CONFERENCE WAS IN LINE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS MADE AT OAU MAURITIUS SUMMIT. ARTICLE INDICATED MOHAMMED KAMIL ALI, MPL LEADER, HAD STATED THAT MPL HAD DEMANDED IN FACE OF FRENCH DELAYS THAT AFRICA MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITY AND IMPLEMENT MAURITIUS RESOLUTIONS ON TFAI. MPL LEADER NOTED THAT QUESTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP, REFUGEES AND FORMATION OF COMMON POLITICAL PLATFORM ON ISSUES SUCH AS DECOLONIZATION PROCESS COULD ONLY BE SETTLED WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE. ALI CHARACTERIZED SITUATION IN DJIBOUTI AS "STATE OF SIEGE" AND "SAVAGE REPRESSION".

2. ALI STATED MPL HAD DEMANDED CONDEMNATION OF FRENCH COLONIALISM
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BECAUSE OF ITS MANEUVERING, DELAYING, AND DIVISIVE TACTICS. HE CALLED FOR DECOLONIZATION BASED ON FOLLOWING POINTS:
A) LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES;
B) RELEASE OF ALL POLITICAL DETAINEES AND HALT OF ARTIBRARY ARRESTS;
C) CREATION OF ATMOSPHERE CONDUCIVE TO ACCESSION OF JUST, EACEFUL AND GENUINE INDEPENDENCE;

D) ABOLITION OF ALL COLONIAL STRUCTURES; AND
E) WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FRENCH TROOPS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE.

3. STATING THAT OAU HAD RECOGNIZED THAT GOF COULD NOT BE BOTH JUDGE AND EXECUTIVE, ALI NOTED THAT INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN DJIBOUTI HAD NOT IMPROVED SINCE OAU SUMMIT, AND THAT ALI AREF HAD RESIGNED IN FAVOR OF FALSE NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT. LPAI HAD THEN TAKEN OVER POWER MERELY TO DIS-SOCIATE ITSELF FROM ALI AREF AND CONTINUED TO MISLEAD PEOPLE AND MAKE IT APPEAR ONLY FIGHT IS FOR ACQUISITION OF FRENCH ID CARDS. LPAI ALSO HAD "SINISTER" MOTIVE OF MAKING FRENCH COLONIALISM APPEAR "BENEVOLENT".

COMMENT: BOTH FRENCH AND SOMALI SOURCES HAD INDICATED EARLIER THAT PARIS CONFERENCE WOULD BE HELD ABOUT FEBRUARY 15. HOWEVER, FRENCH SOURCE TODAY INDICATED MEETING MAY BE CANCELLED. HE ALSO INDICATED POSSIBILITY THAT REFERENDUM AND ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD SIMULTANEOUSLY. HE STATED THAT LEADERSHIP OF MPL IS COMPOSED OF FORMER FRENCH UNIVERSITY CLASSMATES OF EPMG POLITBURO CHIEF HAILE FIDA, AND EXPRESSED OPINION THAT THERE ARE GROWING SIGNS THAT FUTURE EPMG ASSISTANCE WOULD BE PRIMARILY DIRECTED TO MPL, VICE DIVIDED UNI.

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